

The questions we should be asking our politicians

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Introduction

Too many political interviews and debates miss the real questions. They aim for theatre, not scrutiny. So, what should we actually be asking politicians? This list has been developed as a [result of a comment here](#) by a person who calls themselves **RobertJ**.

Who do you serve?

- * Who are you really working for?
- * Is it the wealthy, big business, or ordinary people? How can we tell?
- * Whose interests shape your policies?
- * If you take donations, how do we know they don't influence your decisions?
- * Why should politicians be allowed to receive private donations at all?
- * Given how little it would cost, shouldn't politics be state-funded to prove it's free from corruption?

Why do you think you have a right to govern?

- * Was the election that put you in office genuinely fair?
- * Did a majority in your constituency actually vote for you?
- * If not, how are those who didn't vote for you represented?
- * Why does a minority so often choose the MP for a constituency in the UK?
- * Wouldn't proportional representation be a far better way of selecting those who govern us?

Is it right that you sit in a UK parliament?

* There's growing evidence that the UK is an outdated, imperial concept. A majority in Scotland now appear to want self-government. Many in Northern Ireland wish to unite with Ireland. Wales may not be far behind. In that case, what gives England the right to govern countries that increasingly do not want to be in a union with it? Why are you clinging to the remnants of Empire?

What is your goal in government?

- * Every government has a choice: to manage the economy or to manage the country. Which is your priority?
- * If it's the economy, why do you obsess over balancing the government's books?
- * Why talk about "taxpayers' money" when you must know that all government spending is funded by money created by the Bank of England on the government's behalf?
- * Why do government deficits matter if the economy is at full employment?
- * Why worry about the cost of government borrowing when quantitative easing and tightening have both proved there's no direct link between borrowing and government spending?

What is your economic plan for us?

- * Are you committed to protecting the well-being of ordinary people?
- * Will you tackle inequality? If so, how?
- * How will you grow people's real after-tax and housing incomes?
- * Why do you want economic growth at all? Given that GDP growth rarely trickles down, how will you ensure real growth in household incomes?

How will you fund your promises?

- * What matters more to you — people, or balanced budgets?
- * We plainly need more government spending. Do you agree? If not, why not?
- * Why does the government issue debt at all?
- * Do you understand that when the government can create money via its central bank, government debt is largely an expensive savings scheme for the wealthy, big business and bankers?
- * When the economy needs it, will you allow debt to rise through money creation, or will you cut services just to balance the books?

Who will you tax more?

- * More spending needs more tax or borrowing to keep inflation under control. So, who will you tax more?
- * Will you tax wealth fairly?
- * Will you tax the wealthy enough to redistribute income and wealth in a way we've not seen for decades?
- * Why is the tax rate on income from work higher than on investment income? How will you fix this?
- * Will you properly fund HMRC to pursue tax cheats?
- * Given that only around 60% of small companies pay what they owe, according to HMRC, what will you do about that?

What is the state for?

- * Is the government just there to keep the market economy running?
- * Or is it the government's job to care for people, to build resilience and well-being?
- * How should the state deal with market failure?
- * In particular, how should it address climate change, and why isn't this your top priority?

Will you challenge vested interests?

- * Will you take on finance, landlords and monopolies, who, according to the Resolution Foundation, are ensuring that household disposable incomes in the UK will not rise this decade? How will you do that?
- * How will you reduce big business influence over government?
- * How important are the wealthy really to the UK economy? What do they contribute, versus what do they extract?

How will you measure success?

- * If you say you want "growth", what do you mean, and growth for whom?
- * What other metrics matter to you, and how do you balance them?
- * How will you show you care about poverty, well-being, the environment, soft power and security?

And finally

- * These are the sorts of questions that reveal what politicians actually think.
- * We deserve real answers.
- * So, ask your politicians questions like these. Hold them to account.
- * Any of these can be used as a basis for a letter to your MP. Use this [linked ChatGPT prompt to help, if you want.](#)